

STACK
ANNEX

5

064

559

A

0
0
0
1
8
5
0
0
8



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

(2891

B/393

PRESENTATION COPY

THE SEPTUAGINT FALLACY



THE SEPTUAGINT FALLACY

An Indictment of Modern Criticism

BY THE REV.
W. I. PHILLIPS, M.A.

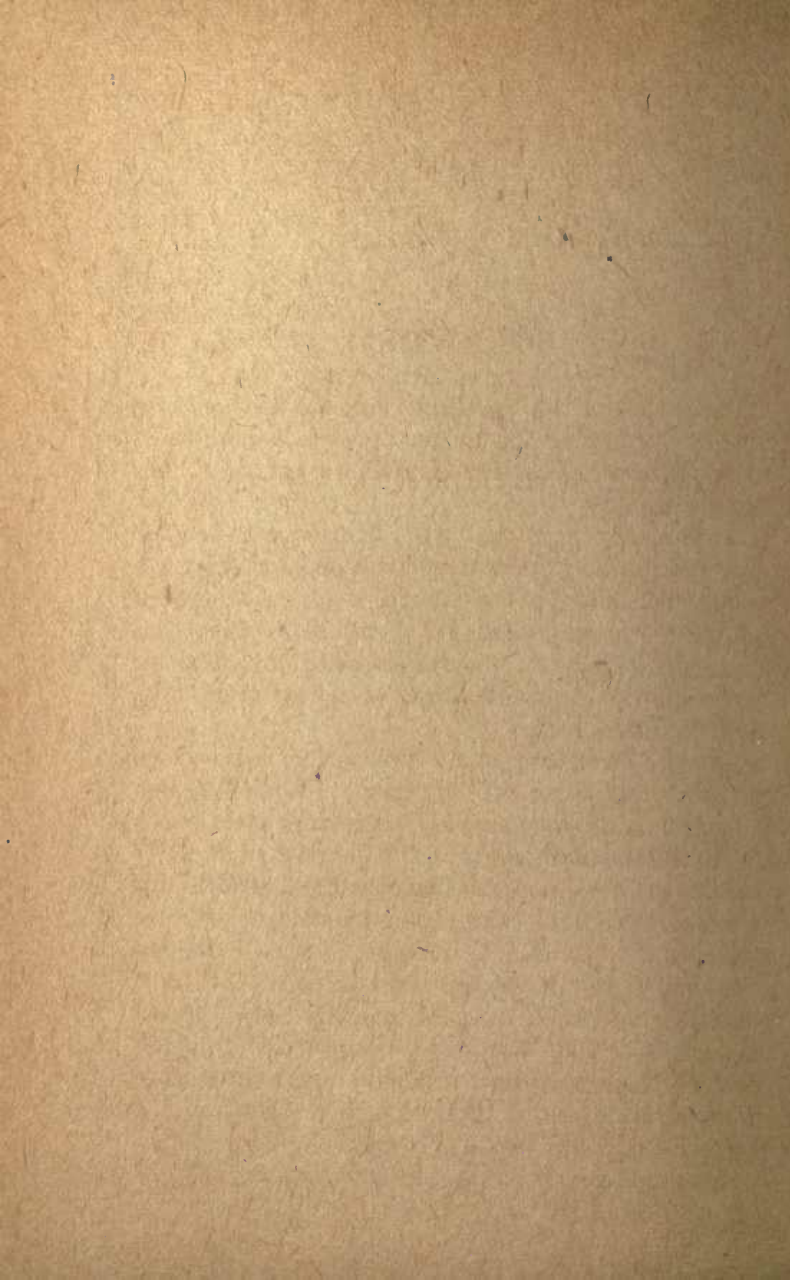
WITH FOREWORD BY
PREBENDARY DENISON

Author of
"The Making of Gods," "The True Religion," &c.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM

LONDON : ROBERT SCOTT
ROXBURGHE HOUSE
PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

MCMXVIII



FOREWORD.

THE Author of this excellent fragment having done me the honour of asking me to write a Foreword, it is with very real pleasure that I accede to his kind request.

It is surely time that we cease to be cowed by the *ipse dixit* of German criticism, and that we pause to consider the actual value of the glib phrase "assured results." I would suggest that we should correct our impressions of German criticism by a consideration of the motives that seem to underlie it.

(1) Dr. Newman, many years ago, warned us against the error of speaking of "the Jewish Church" and "the Christian Church." The Church is careful to teach us that the purport of the Old Testament is to set forth Christ as the One Mediator between God and man, being Himself both God and Man. The Old Testament is (to use Bishop Westcott's forcible word) the "record" of Jesus Christ. Is it thus that the modern critical mind regards the Old Testament Scriptures? I think not. We hear that quite ridiculous and unintelligent word "Judaism" applied to the religion of the Church under the Old Covenant. We hear sinister mutterings about "pre-Christian morality" as

an excuse for belittling the Psalter. We find the Old Testament history interpreted as the record of the "feeling after" a pure Monotheism by the Semitic race; we are told that after long struggles "Judaism" finally emerged as pure Monotheism; that is to say, that the net result of the wonderful history of God's dealings with His visible Church was that they at last emerged at the satisfactory level of Cain! Truly a noble result! Now, if German criticism starts, as apparently it too often does, from such a mental attitude as this, we are bound a priori to look at its "assured results" with a considerable amount of suspicion. It is the old story of the "doctrinaire." That noxious person starts by evolving a theory, and then attempts, by fair means or foul, to square history with his preconceived idea.

(2) If we turn to the writings of some of the apostles and prophets of German criticism, we find glaring and gross instances of the attempt to force history to square with some pet theory. A proposal was gravely made some years ago that "the Church of England" should re-edit the Book of Exodus, on the ground that the writer was convinced that the MS. of the said Book had got muddled and confused. But, unfortunately for him, this naïve person let the cat out of the bag by producing his theory. He had conceived that the whole of the ordinance of the Tabernacle and its worship was a concession, on the part of God, to the weakness of man, *in consequence* of the episode of the golden calf. He imagined that God, seeing that His people wanted to worship something, gave

them something by which they could worship Him harmlessly! But, unfortunately for this sublime theory, the Book of Exodus places the ordinance of the Tabernacle *before* the episode of the golden calf. *Therefore* the Book must have got mixed up somehow. Poor Book of Exodus! It would not square with Mr. Somebody's theory, and therein lies its condemnation!

Another of these apostles and prophets tells us that he finds his conscience seriously hurt at the stoning of the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath. The Book must somehow be squared with this sensitive conscience, and *therefore* it is a comfort to Mr. So-and-so to be able to say that this was "a later interpolation"! This same prophet, in dealing in his masterful way with the Song of Solomon, trots out the old theory of the Shulamite and the shepherd, because, again, his delicately sensitive conscience will not allow him to think that it can have to do with the adding (as he says) of another to the already overstocked establishment of Solomon!

(3) The Author has pointed out that much of German criticism is in the interest of the elimination of the miraculous from the Scriptures of the Old Covenant. I need add nothing to what he has said on this head; but I would just remark that, inasmuch as mysteries are revealed to the meek, the presuppositions that "what I know not is not knowledge" is hardly the temper in which to approach, with any hope of success, the understanding of the Record of God's Revelation of Himself!

No ! If these people want to lure us to follow them out into the wilderness of their own imaginations, they are unwise in their generation if they think that they can tempt us with such baits as these ; and they must have a very poor (not to say uncomplimentary) estimate of our intelligence, if they think us so intellectually beneath contempt that they are not afraid to " show their hand " in the ways to which I have called attention. Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird !

Our Author, then, is doing signal good service when he challenges the "*assured results*" of German criticism of the Old Testament, and shows as he does, clearly and concisely, the bearings of the LXX Fallacy. It is indeed time that we got a little behind the German bluster and looked at its leading and underlying motives.

I heartily wish the Author the success that he so well deserves.

HENRY P. DENISON.

ST. MICHAEL'S VICARAGE,
NORTH KENSINGTON.

March 6th, 1918.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

TRUTHS AND FACTS CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE JEWS' ACCOUNT OF THE TEXT	- 23
II. THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH STORY OF THE SAME	- - - - - 27
III. THE TWOFOLD DIVISION OF THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT	- - - - - 30
(1) From Moses to the Massoretic Text (Ezra).	
(2) From the Massoretic Text (Ezra) to the Present Day..	

PART II.

TRUTH AND FACTS *RE* LXX ITSELF.

I. SOME FEATURES OF LXX AS A TRANSLATION	35
II. VERDICT OF HISTORY CONCERNING THE LXX	42
III. ANCIENT JEWISH OPINION OF LXX	- 45
IV. INFLUENCE OF LXX ON N.C. WORDS	- 48

PART III.

THE PROBLEM STATED.

TWO DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE VIEWS OF THE
HEBREW TEXT.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE ANCIENT CHURCH (JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN) VIEW - - -	53
II. THE MODERN CRITICAL VIEW - - -	58
III. THESE TWO CONTRASTED; WITH RESULT -	65

PART IV.

CONCLUSIONS.

I AS TO LXX - - - -	69
II. AS TO MASSORETIC TEXT - - -	71
III. SOME NEGLECTED FACTORS OF THE PROBLEM	75

PLAN OF THE BOOK.

PART		PAGE
	FOREWORD - - - -	5
	INTRODUCTION - - - -	13
I.	TRUTHS AND FACTS CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT - -	23
II.	TRUTH AND FACTS CONCERNING THE LXX ITSELF - - - -	35
III.	THE PROBLEM STATED, VIZ., "THE LXX FALLACY" - - - -	53
IV.	THE ONLY CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER -	69

SYNOPSIS OF INTRODUCTION.

A.—Opportuneness of reopening Old Covenant Problem at a Crisis when

I. Everything *evil* as well as good is on its trial, and,

II. When there is a tendency to question hitherto generally accepted standards.

B.—Urgent need to reinstate Divine authority and Inspiration of the Sacred Text (Hebrew and Greek), supported by present reaction

I. *Against* modern critical methods, and

II. *In favour* of belief in the miraculous.

C.—Necessity of reasserting the true office and function of "tradition."

D.—Mistake of applying to a Hebrew Text methods applicable only to Greek textual criticism.

INTRODUCTION.

A.

IT is a common and simple truism at the present time to say that in this world-crisis everything is being "thrown into the melting-pot," and so well shaken up that only the things "unshakeable" can stand out and endure. But this word seems to be used rather one-sidedly, and to mean only that everything good and serviceable, everything constitutional and traditional, is being tried, sifted, and "found out" wherever it is wanting. Surely this one-sided and pessimistic application of an all-round truth is a mistake and wrong. Are not the many monstrous evils which have arisen and accumulated of late, and, as it were automatically, also on trial?

Such evils, for instance, as the whole Germanic doctrine of brute force, whether in Church or State, politics or finance, and wherever found, in England or America, quite as much as in Germany or Turkey.

Without doubt prescriptive *evil*, as well as long-established good, is being called upon at this time to prove its claim to existence; evil, as well as good, is on its trial, its shams and humbugs are at last

being exposed, having imposed only too long on the credulity of many all the world over.

We have often, in the past, proved defenceless in the combat with evil, spiritual as well as material, mainly because it had crept in so insidiously that we were scarcely aware of its presence till it lifted its head to strike. But a change has come over the face of things with the war, and with the tendency it has aroused to question standards hitherto almost universally accepted.

This may at length deliver us from the pompous darkness and ignorance which has of late masqueraded so successfully as light itself; and from "assertions," "assumptions," and "hypotheses" which almost have driven the simple old truth out of the field almost—but not quite.

Progress—so called—had led us wellnigh over the precipice; "advanced" thought had all but pushed us into the mouth of hell, when the Voice of God was heard in the trumpet-note of battle bidding us "halt" and "retrace our steps" from a blind acquiescence in many things not inaptly described as "made in Germany."

We hear often of "psychological moments," but if ever there was one for the English Church and the British Empire it is now—to hear, and obey, this stern Voice of God, bidding us expose, and oppose, evil in whatever guise it comes, and it is to one aspect of this trial of evil in the English Church that we propose to address ourselves in these pages.

B.

Again, the opportunity is great, and so are the reasons why this subject of "The LXX Fallacy" should be considered now.

First, because authority in the Church has been much weakened of late in one of its bed-rock bases, namely, the commanding Voice of God in the Bible and Prayer Book.

By undermining the credit of the Bible, and especially by casting doubts on the true text of the Old Covenant books, the gravest injury has been inflicted, consciously or unconsciously, on the supreme authority of the Majesty of God, with regard to His Word.

In attempting to reinstate the O.C. in its original unquestioned position as the undoubted Word of God (the TRUTH which is JESUS) we hope we shall be doing our best to bring this Divine Authority back again into full play, and at the same time offering humbly some sort of reparation to the offended Majesty of God for the gross tampering with His written Word which has obtained of late.

Second. Another reason why this is the exact moment for reopening a question which the critics fondly imagine they have closed for ever is, that there is, and must be, at present, a very healthy reaction against the critical spirit of the last century, which was so largely "made in Germany."

The fashion of taking things for granted (especially if imported from Germany), of talking vaguely

about "assured results" and "what every one accepts," or "points on which scholars are agreed," will have to end now.

All this, in point of fact, was but a thinly veiled variety of that German mentality which substitutes bullying and bluff for real thinking and honest facing of facts.

In future a great deal of healthy suspicion will have to be exercised against all such methods; and a new era of real study has, we hope, set in to sweep away the tyranny of false criticism based on German principles.

This then is just the time to question very sharply the common opinion with regard to the Old Covenant text, an opinion so generally accepted, and seeming so entirely to hold the ground, that there might appear to be no alternative standpoint demanding careful recognition rather than merely contemptuous indifference.

And because of this indifference—if for no other reason—it seems fitting that some attempt should be made to reopen the whole Old Covenant question, and to show how the real facts handed down by the Church, old and new, for generations, give us a very different conclusion from that which is so generally, and lightly, accepted at the present time.

It can never be easy or pleasant to run counter to an almost universally accepted opinion, and the boldness of venturing to protest in this case can only be defended by remembering :

I. That "no amount of honoured names can breathe life into a corruption," and

II. That the deplorable consequences of the present position in unsettling faith and undermining Divine Authority are so far-reaching that a protest cannot be left unattempted without incurring a true bill of disloyalty to our Lord, His Truth, and His Church.

Also there must be many who cannot any longer acquiesce in the present position as regards the Old Covenant text, no matter how many seem to uphold it, or what strange hypotheses and dogmas are brought forward to support it.

For the more widespread the poison the greater the need of dealing with the plague at once fearlessly and without regard to cost or consequence.

III. A third reason for calling attention to this matter now lies in another healthy reaction working at this time against the prevalent tendency to question and disbelieve the miraculous.

For now we have all round us rising from our battle-fields a positive atmosphere of "the wonderful," and there is no escaping from the miraculous; more than this, these miracles and wonders are admittedly due to the direct intervention of God—"This is the Lord's doing," and therefore "it is marvellous in our eyes." Even "the fool" cannot say now "there is no God," for miracles of all sorts and kinds rise up on every side to refute and confound him.

This glad acknowledgment of the miraculous cuts off one of the chief roots of bitterness which seemed to be at the bottom of much modern criticism. Divine Inspiration, Revelation, Prophecy, and the like were all too marvellously miraculous to be allowed by the critics, so all such they cut down and explained away until at last this rationalistic tendency became hardened into one of their stiffest dogmas.

But now we must get rid of this presupposition, for miracles and the miraculous have become the chief desiderata in anything like careful work ; they are reinstated by God in their ancient and honourable place as the *sine qua non* condition of all truly scientific investigation.

Any difficulty, therefore, arising from the presence of the miraculous all over God's ancient History, and in close connection with all His Holy Words, must vanish at last, for these very difficulties are transmuted into the strongest buttresses of the faith, and become the raw material and bed-rock foundation of Divine Truth.

All that needs doing is to state over and over again for the Old Covenant (as St. John did of old for the New) the wonders and marvels of its history ; such as the miraculous transmission and preservation of the sacred texts, both Hebrew and Greek. And such faithful restatement will do its convincing work with all humble and faithful disciples of the Maker and Sustainer of heaven and earth to His greater glory and their joy and peace.

C.

Another much-despised factor in this investigation has once more to come to its own, that of "Tradition" and the traditional standpoint, which has been handed down to us by the Church (Jewish and Christian) throughout the ages. Such a weighty and undoubted fact and factor cannot any longer be considered as negligible in our problem. It is easy enough to see and smile at the abuse of tradition, or rather of so-called "traditions" (especially Roman ones)—but such abuse must not make us blind to its right use and proper place in the problem under review.

Indeed no small amount of truth is wrapped up in the dictum lately set forth that, at many points, "tradition is history"; and, at the least, we may be quite sure that *that* can not be true historical work which does not assign its full and proper place to a factor so important.

D.

Finally, attention must be paid to the chief mistake of modern critics, who insist on applying the principles of *Greek* textual criticism to the Hebrew text. It does not need much reflection to realize that principles which rule and work very well with a text which is the resultant outcome of "3107" MSS. cannot be seriously supposed to be

applicable to a text like the Hebrew (M.T.), which is *really* independent of MSS.

Nor must we forget that the classical scholarship so necessary for Greek MSS. criticism is not only of little use, but rather very gravely misleading if applied, as it has been, to the study of such an entirely different eastern language as Hebrew.

A very clever and painstaking classical scholar (even without any assistance from Germany) may (and from the nature of the case is likely to) prove a most inadequate Hebraist.

This initial and far-reaching blunder is responsible for much of the strange incapacity shown by critics to understand aright such problems as the Divine Revelation in the Hebrew language inevitably brings in its train. For instance, a language which possesses no present tense (because, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as present time), and whose first person singular is our third person ("He" is first and "I am" third)—such a language demands a training very different to that of modern classical scholarship.

The above main points, we think, must show clearly the pressing need for re-examining, at the present time, the generally received positions and dicta of modern criticism of the Old Covenant Hebrew text.

PART I.

TRUTHS AND FACTS CONCERNING THE
ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT.

NOTANDUM.

BEFORE going further it may be as well to state clearly that what follows is written only for "the confirmation of the faith" of those Church people who believe *ex animo* in the great standing miracle of an *Inspiration*, worthy the name, and taken in its technical sense.

And also that the writer has a very profound sense of the importance and urgent need of the application of much further deep and humble *study* to this question of the original Hebrew text, than has been given by modern *criticism*.

ABBREVIATIONS.

"O.C."=Old Covenant, instead of Old Testament.

"N.C."=New Covenant, instead of New Testament.

"M.T."=The "Massoretic" Text of the Hebrew O.C.

"LXX."=The "Septuagint." The Version of the "70."

The Septuagint Fallacy.

CHAPTER I.

THE JEWS' ACCOUNT OF THE TEXT.

THE first thing to do in an inquiry like this is to get the facts quite clearly before us.

And to do this we have simply to restate the verdict of the Church (Jewish and Christian) all along the ages, and to remind ourselves that it was universally and absolutely accepted without question till the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

Moreover the witness of this verdict is a living witness and abides to this day.

- (a) With the *Jews*, whom God has preserved all along for this very purpose.
- (b) With "*the Church*," whose witness also is undying and unchangeable.

Let us consider first the verdict of the Jews and their witness to it, in the present day, which seem to have been entirely overlooked.

The sum and substance of their testimony is that the contents of the Old Covenant canonical

books, as we have them, are both genuine and authentic, *i.e.*

- (a) That these said books have come down to us in a substantially genuine and uncorrupted condition, and
- (b) Are actually the production of those whose names they bear.

On both of these points—their genuineness and authenticity—the witness of the Jews to this day is emphatic and unchangeable.

The history of writings so ancient as the Old Covenant canonical books must of course depend largely upon existing tradition, and the trustworthy traditions of the Jews have established, as the firm belief of Christendom in every age, the following facts with regard to the Old Covenant writings:

1. "The Law" was written by Moses and consists of the Pentateuch.
2. Other records were written by Joshua, David, Nathan, and Gad.
3. Psalms of David are "David."
4. Solomon, his Books, Job, and other writers are authentic.
5. Later on arose the writing Prophets (from latter part of the ninth century to latter part of the fifth century B.C.), whose pens filled up the volume of the Old Covenant with a rich store of prophecy and poetry.

In the time of Hezekiah two rolls similar to that of "the Law" appear :

The *first* named "the Prophets" (=four books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, last four chapters of the latter written at later date), and

The *second* volume or "roll" was named "The Writings," Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, to which was added later Ruth, Song of Solomon, Nehemiah, and Chronicles ; next collection was of "the latter Prophets," Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, with twelve minor prophets, at first in one book.

In the words of a present-day Jew, "orthodox Jews" believe that :

"The stories in the Old Covenant book from the very first letter in Genesis to the last in Malachi, without any exception, are real Truth, real history of Facts which happened just as they are described."

And again :

"Orthodox Jews believe that the Hebrew text of the Old Covenant which the Jews have to-day is the original text as it was written down by Moses the Prophet and Ezra the Scribe. There can be no doubt that the oldest rabbis (about 150 to 100 B.C.) Christ, and His Apostles, and all the members of the first Church had before them exactly the same Hebrew text (O.C.) which the Jews have to-day. It is absolutely impossible to admit the slightest difference between the Hebrew text of to-day and that of twenty-four centuries ago. As it is true that the same sun which was shining

twenty-four centuries ago is shining to-day, so it is true that the same Hebrew Old Covenant text which the Jewish rabbis after Ezra, Christ, the Apostles, and the Church in Jerusalem read, the Jews of to-day are reading without the slightest difference."

Such is the clear, unhesitating verdict of the Jew of to-day with regard to the genuineness and authenticity of the original Hebrew text ; which " higher critics " must refute fairly and thoroughly before any hearing can be granted to their assumptions. On *them* lies the *onus probandi* ; it is *they* who have to explain away satisfactorily this great factor in the problem, the witness of the Jews which is so entirely against them and their theories.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH STORY OF THE SAME.

Now we come to the traditional *Church* story of the same.

“ In the name of the Holy Scripture we understand those canonical books of the Old Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church ” (Article VI.).

In the above words we have, exactly and summarily, the traditional verdict of the whole Church with regard to the canonical books of the Hebrew Scriptures.

So much for the number and names of the Old Covenant books ; with regard to their authenticity, (*i.e.* to the fact that they were actually the production of those whose name they bear), all that we can say is that, when the whole Church “ in the Holy Ghost ” accepted them as canonical, the question of their authenticity was fully settled, since canonicity means the Church’s Divine acceptance of the same books as authentic.

The evidence of their canonicity establishes

the fact that these "books were extant among the Jews and in the early Christian Church, and were attributed to the authors whose names are associated with the books of which the modern Bible consists."

Their canonicity vouches not only for their "*authenticity*" but also for their "*genuineness*" as well, *i.e.* settles authoritatively that the said books were not only written by the authors whose names they bear, but, also and further, that they have come down to modern times in substantially genuine or uncorrupted condition. With regard to the genuineness or uncorruptness of the Old Covenant books (Hebrew) one important point must be carefully kept in mind, viz., that there is a great difference between the Hebrew books and the Greek writings, as regards liability to errors and mistakes. For mistakes made in process of copying (the chief cause of error) are far more liable to occur in a text (as the Greek), which depends on Manuscript transmission than in one of which the Hebrew has been preserved and handed down ORALLY, by word of mouth, and NOT by Manuscripts. In the former case the cause of corruption may be wilful or accidental (mistakes of copyists, etc.), whereas in the latter such corruption is rendered in a very high degree improbable owing to the great safeguard of the well-known reverence and jealousy of the Jews for the letter of the Scriptures, and for the books which contain them. It is also to be observed that, however much tempted by their

uncompromising hostility to Christians, the Jews have, with scrupulous honesty, never tampered with, or attempted to expunge, any particulars discreditable to their history ; nor have they ever interfered with most important Messianic predictions, found in existing text of the Hebrew Prophets, which might have been easily and wilfully suppressed.

Therefore it seems probable, when the circumstances of the case are taken into account, that the text of the Hebrew Scriptures is free alike from wilful and accidental error.

The unquestioned canonicity of the Old Covenant books as we have them (establishing them both as genuine and authentic), was the universal and unvarying verdict of the whole Church for sixteen centuries. It is only in later times that some have been led, chiefly by the influence of German rationalism, to question and doubt facts up to that time so firmly established.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWOFOLD DIVISION OF THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT.

THE history of the Hebrew text, which is as interesting as it is important, obviously admits of a clear twofold division into :

- (1) The story of it from the first (Moses) up to the formation of the Massoretic Text (in the time of Ezra).
- (2) The story from that time down to the present day.

For our purpose, however, it will be better to reverse their order and take the second stage first, viz.,

- (2) "From the date of the Massoretic text up to the present time."

This stage is a very simple one, consisting solely of Manuscripts copied exactly from the Massoretic Text, at first by writing and then by printing.

The great climax in the history of the text, of course, is the point at which the text of the Canonical books was fixed and settled in the Massoretic Text (c. 300 B.C.).

Soon after the captivity—the Sopherim,¹ the Scribes (lit. the “Counters”) under Ezra and Nehemiah collected together as many copies of rolls as could be found for the purpose of making a correct *standard* copy of the Old Covenant Scriptures.

The ordinary tradition of the Jews is that Ezra undertook the work in conjunction with 120 members of the “Great Synagogue” assisted by the prophets Zechariah and Haggai.

When the Sopherim had examined and compared all the copies at their command, the text of the Old Covenant books was arranged by them in the form which became known as the “*Massoretic Text*,” the “authorized” Bible of the Jews (c. 300 B.C.), and an exact transcript of it was then deposited in the Temple to replace the Autograph MSS. which had been lost in the destruction of the original Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. This transcript was doubtless the copy spoken of by Josephus as being still in the Temple in his time, and as having been carried in procession at Rome among the other spoils of the Holy House.

This standard (Massoretic) text is the only one in use at the present day among both Jews and Christians, the present received text having come down to us through MSS. which agree in being exact copies of it.

This *identical sameness* of MSS. is very important,

¹ For full account of Sopherim see Ginsburg's “Introduction.”

because it shows that there is here no room for that textual criticism which must be used in the case of the three thousand or so *differing* Greek MSS. of the New Covenant books ; and proves how great an error it is to attempt to apply the principles of New Covenant criticism to a study so essentially different as that of the extant Hebrew MSS. which all agree with the standard text. And we must remember that this standard text is called Massoretic, not because the Massoretes made it (for it was the work of the Sopherim), but only because they were its authorized custodians by means of their "Massorah."¹

This second stage therefore presents no difficulty, and certainly gives no data for any textual criticism, the Massoretic (standard) Text being handed intact and without variations down to our own time.

But there still remains the further question with regard to the original texts up to c. 300 B.C.—when the text was fixed, that is

(1) We have now to consider the history of the text from *Moses to Ezra*. And we find that "The Book of the Law," the Pentateuch (a definite book) is spoken of throughout the Old Covenant Scriptures as being in the text, with directions as to how it was to be added to from time to time (by Psalms, records, etc.) and to be kept up to date by the Prophets (cf. "schools of the Prophets," Samuel).

¹ See Companion Bible, Part I, Appendix 30.

These directions, written on rolls, were kept in the Tabernacle (as "the Law" is in the ark of every synagogue to this day) and afterwards deposited in the Temple. Since many of the autographs were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar it was necessary that there should be the final standard text which was compiled by the Sopherim (the "authorized" revisers) under Ezra and Nehemiah, and is the present universally received Massoretic Text.

In addition, however, or rather as complementary, to this text, handed down on the rolls and preserved in the Temple, there was going on concurrently the *oral* transmission, which was essentially necessary because the written text of the rolls consisted merely of consonants and had NO *vowel* points.

The rolls, containing only consonants (as W R D, B D) did not fully determine the words, *i.e.* whether "w(o)rd" or "w(a)rd," "b(i)d," "b(a)d," "b(e)d": some way therefore had to be found for handing down the only right vowel sounds (as "a" and not "o" in *ward* ("i" and not "o" or "e" in "*bid*"), and this was done by *reciting* the text *aloud* with the *right vowel sound*, as testified by the "authorized" custodians, which was thus correctly handed down *orally* from generation to generation.

Thus not only had the right letters (*consonants*) to be preserved (and were), but the right vowel sounds, also determining the correct words in every case, were transmitted exactly from age to age,

by constant *recitation* in the *hearing of those* qualified to know, and correct where necessary—*i.e.* the “authorized” custodians, so that, at last, it became almost impossible to substitute a *wrong* vowel sound for the right one.

The consonant letters having been thus carefully preserved, and the vowel sounds handed down *orally*, nothing remained but to *stereotype* them both, by subscribing underneath the fixed consonantal text the right vowel notations, which were invented or first used about the fifth century A.D.

This text (consonantal), with the proper vowel sounds subscribed, has remained the same to our own day; and all Hebrew MSS. agree in giving substantially the same text, which was afterwards *printed*, A.D. 1447, and is our present printed received text as used by Jews and Christians alike.

PART. II.

TRUTH AND FACTS RE LXX ITSELF.

CHAPTER I.

SOME FEATURES OF LXX AS A TRANSLATION.

WE must now consider the Greek translation (or rather "mistranslation") of the Seventy called the Septuagint (LXX), because from the abuse of this version comes the foundation of modern destructive criticism of the Old Covenant Scriptures.

At present, as some one has written, there is a great feeling that the Old Covenant text (the Massoretic) is demonstrably "corrupt in a number of places and in need of emendation," though the writer adds: "I imagine that this general feeling is pretty widespread, but not very profoundly rooted."

This "general feeling" comes from statements of professors and teachers who speak too often of "assured results of criticism," of "what is generally admitted by scholars"—and from such results being popularized in small text-books as *e.g.* those of Professors Adeney and Bennett. But this generally accepted view of the "corruption of the Massoretic Text in a number of places and its need of emendation" springs mainly from the fact that in many cases the LXX differs from the Hebrew text, from which undoubted fact the terribly *false conclusion*

is deduced that *therefore* there must have been some other text or texts which agree better with this Greek version.

In Dr. Swete's words :

"In the LXX (the student) has before him a version of an *early text* which has often differed materially from the text of the pointed Hebrew Bible and of all existing Hebrew texts" (which Hebrew texts, however, are all of them identically the same).

Now this false conclusion is a very glaring *non sequitur*, for instead of the LXX variations from the Massoretic Text arising from any other Hebrew text or texts, there is another reason for all such to be found in what must be called the negligible value and very bad character of the LXX as a translation.

For these variations *are actually* nothing but the mistakes and blunders of a very bad translation of the one and only original Hebrew text ("one and only" because it is not proven and perhaps is quite unprovable that any other text ever existed).

It seems therefore necessary that a clear account should first of all be given of this Greek version—the LXX, which is the *fons et origo*, the very foundation head, of the errors and delusions of much modern Higher Criticism of the Old Covenant Scriptures.

Some careful investigation—making full use of the late Dr. Swete's "Introduction"—produces the following results :—

That the LXX is a very *heterogeneous* bit of work.¹

(1) It is not, strictly speaking, a complete version, but a series of different versions by different hands, of unequal value in parts, and of varying standards of excellence.

The translators of the different parts had different purposes—*e.g.*, The Hagiographa, "The Writings," being looked at by the Alexandrians quite differently from, and as on a lower level than, the "Pentateuch," and "The Prophets" as merely national literature and so treated with the freedom allowed by custom to such writings.

2. It was an *experiment*, a translation of a Semitic book into the language of the West, "it was the work of pioneers" and necessarily had "the defects of pioneers" (Kirkpatrick). The Hebrew idioms of the later books refused to be translated into Hellenic Greek and so lost greatly their identity.

And we must remember that most of these translators learnt Hebrew from imperfectly instructed teachers (Alexandrian) in Egypt, and could not have the necessary traditional interpretation of obscure words and contexts of the Palestinian Jew.

The want of this sound tradition is manifest in the poetical books and other passages.

Some other characteristic features of the LXX translators are that :

(a) They sacrificed the Greek idiom in their rather

¹ cf. Dr. Kirkpatrick's words :

"In dealing with the LXX we remember that it is *not* a homogeneous work but differs very considerably in character and value in different Books, if not in parts of some Books."

clumsy attempts to preserve the Hebrew constructions ; sometimes setting sense at defiance in giving what they conceived to be the meaning of the Hebrew.

In some books, especially Isaiah and the Psalms, entire sentences are unintelligible from this cause.

(b) They *transliterate* words and these not merely proper names ; and sometimes add translations of their " transliterations " which are called " doublets."

(c) They often amplify and occasionally omit, and interpret, qualify and refine ; and render some Hebrew words by more than one Greek one in the same context, and often employ metaphors.

(d) Letters and clauses are transposed ; so that it is plain that the LXX translation has suffered much from insufficient knowledge of Hebrew and failure to grasp the sense of the context.

In Dr. Swete's words : " The (LXX) student must be *constantly* on his guard against errors which may too easily result from too ready an acceptance of the evidence of the LXX," and again " whether for textual or exegetic purposes it must be used with caution and reserve," and the total result from the above admissions is that the LXX is a very poor translation of whatever text ; so poor that its differences from the Massoretic Text may only prove the badness of its translation and nothing more ; and it seems, on the above evidence, so untruthworthy as not to be worth troubling about at all, much less to be used as the chief support

for very questionable hypotheses and assumptions. And yet Dr. Swete says that for the first six centuries of its history this "LXX was the Bible of the Hellenistic Jew," just as our "Authorized Version" was the Bible of English-speaking people all over the world," and a root of mischief, for it served as a basis for *fresh* "translations into the Vernacular."

CHAPTER II.

THE VERDICT OF HISTORY CONCERNING THE LXX.

WE have next to consider what the verdict has been all along with regard to this LXX translation : and

1. Let us take that of the two great Biblical scholars, (a) *Origen* and (b) *St. Jerome*, for we are told that the " question of the relation of the received text to that presupposed by the LXX was scarcely present to the minds of Christian writers before Origen " and

(a) Origen's task was to establish the superiority of Aquila and other later versions in as far as they were faithful to the original, and he assumed

1. The purity of the original Hebrew.
2. The corruption of the LXX.

He found LXX corrupt and tried to restore it to an agreement with the Hebrew text as he knew it, and " used in his Hexapla, and which was current among Origen's Jewish (not Alexandrian) teachers in the third century, and which he took to be truly representative of the original."

He found that the Greek (LXX) contained in every column clauses which were not in the Hebrew and omitted some which were, and that the order of the Greek departed from that of the Hebrew.

In innumerable places the LXX was seen to yield a version more or less at variance with the current Hebrew through misapprehension of the translators.

His work might be fairly described as a thorough correction of the LXX so as to make it conform to the Hebrew original, ruthlessly brushing it aside when it diverged therefrom.

(b) *St. Jerome* was bolder, and based his new Latin version on the original Hebrew, without a glance at the LXX; and on textual questions appealed with confidence to the verdict of contemporary Jewish opinion; and, like Origen, he indignantly repudiated the charge which was made by some Christians against the Jews of having falsified their MSS.; and neither "Origen nor St. Jerome entertained a suspicion that the Jewish official text had—whether by accident or design—departed from the archetype."

2. As to the rest of its history we find that it was considered

(1) Of little value as a translation, and very unreliable as a commentary on the text.

(2) Up to the time of Origen such a thing as an alternative Hebrew "presupposed" text used by the LXX never entered into the minds of Christian writers.

(3) And when it did it was put aside by both Origen and St. Jerome to make way for the original text; both of these scholars taking up the position that where there was any difference, it was the LXX that was *wrong* and the Massoretic—the

original *Hebrew text* that was *right*, and not *vice versa*.

(4.) The importance of the LXX was quite a modern idea. The Reformers even did not jump at it, because they were under the influence of the rabbis, and rightly so.

(5.) Mediæval Europe had nothing to do with the LXX, knowing the Old Covenant Scriptures exclusively through St. Jerome's Latin version.

(6.) So that we have to wait till the seventeenth century for anyone to venture to press the claims of the LXX (and of the Schismatical Samaritan Pentateuch) which was done by a Protestant writer and a Roman Oratorian, extremes thus meeting as is so often the case.

This attempt only provoked an absolute acceptance of the Massoretic Text (consonants and vowel points) by the Swiss Reformers, and by such experts as the two Buxtorfs, so that it

(7.) Was reserved for the nineteenth century to try and set up modern criticism on this unsatisfactory basis of the Septuagint Fallacy.

Such is a short résumé of the history of the rejection of the LXX all along the ages ; and from it we conclude that while it is one thing, and possible, to use the LXX as a mere version of very questionable value, it is quite another, if not impossible, to use its mistakes and variations as any ground for "presupposing" any other Hebrew version at its back.

CHAPTER III.

ANCIENT JEWISH OPINION OF THE LXX.

WE have already seen the continuous verdict of ancient history and of its two greatest scholars against the evidential value of the LXX. We notice also that even modern writers who have been carried away by the false idea of its textual importance, even they are careful to warn us not to accept its testimony without the strictest examination into its evidential character.

It is necessary, therefore, to weigh carefully the opinions which the special authorities of the synagogues (who had the custody of the Hebrew original text) expressed about this version.

This LXX, we find, was accepted at first both in Palestine and Babylon as based upon current tradition; while the Babylonian Talmud goes so far as to declare that it was composed under Divine guidance, including certain variations from the Hebrew text, though it was granted that it had two striking features:

1. That it was slavishly literal in some parts, and yet
 2. Seriously departed from the Hebrew in others.
- But about 200 B.C. the different schools had so

many different redactions that people were distracted by them; and this fact, and other combined circumstances, imposed upon the responsible custodians of the Sacred (Hebrew) text the great task of undertaking a thorough sifting of various traditions, and of making a collation of different recensions so as, at last, to give the people, for use in public schools and synagogue worship, an authorized, uniform standard text. This text is substantially the same as that which we now possess. The work of this redaction was primarily directed against the supposed recension from which the LXX was thought to be taken, as well as against the Samaritan Pentateuch. The MSS. which belonged to the LXX scholars (which could not, at that period, have been many) were promptly disposed of by being consigned to the receptacle called "Geniza"—prepared for all codices and rolls decayed or ritually illegal and so spoilt.

However, the LXX (like the Samaritan Pentateuch) was beyond the control of the Sopherim—the constituted authorities—and this was the reason why its influence continued.

To meet this emergency it was declared that the LXX was *not* made by the "72" (six representatives of each of the twelve tribes) but only by five, and that the day on which it was made was as calamitous to Israel as the day on which the golden calf was substituted for the true God, because "*the Thorah (Law) cannot adequately be represented in a translation.*"

This anathema was afterwards emphasized by the authorities describing the accomplishment of the LXX as a national calamity, which had been preceded by three days' darkness; and the day on which it was finished was appointed one of the *dies nefasti*.

It was during the period which intervened between the ascription of Divine authority to the LXX and its being publicly anathematized, that the present fixed standard Hebrew text (the Massoretic) was developed and settled by the Sopherim, (the authorized custodians of the ancestral traditions); and the trouble caused by the divergent readings of the LXX, especially in Samuel, Jeremiah, Proverbs, Esther, and Daniel, was probably the primary cause of the activity of the special authorities in issuing one, uniform, standard text.¹

In conclusion, we must remember and emphasize the fact that it is this LXX of most questionable evidential value and such a varied history (the latest of which is as given here in outline) that modern scholars have chosen to use as their chief lever for raising their destructive theories with regard to the corruption of the original Hebrew text.

¹ Compare with this the confusion caused by the different "uses" in England (Hereford, York, and Bangor, etc.), which necessitated the putting forth of one order of worship for all England in our Book of Common Prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE OF LXX ON N.C. WORDS.

IN spite of the thoroughly unsatisfactory character of the LXX as a translation, it must seem surprising that it soon began to exercise a large influence, not only as providing material for other translations of the Old Covenant Scriptures, but also a large power over the writings of the New Covenant, whose authors, we are told, appear to have been not only familiar with this version but saturated with its language, and that they used it "as Englishmen use the Authorized Version—working it into the texture of their thoughts and utterances."

And this in spite of its undoubted incompetence as a translation, as also of the fact that Aquila, Symmachus, and all post-Christian translators of the Old Covenant serve as useful make-weights against the influence of Alexandrian (*i.e.* LXX) interpretation, especially with regard to the meaning of obscure words which Aquila, etc., translate, as competent Hebraists, with full knowledge of both languages, and of other Semitic tongues, whereas the LXX too often depended, and had to depend, on mere guess-work.

And yet the question of this LXX influence on

the words of the New Covenant book needs to be rather carefully examined and by no means taken for granted lightly without any investigation.

For instance, when we are told that "every part of the New Covenant shows knowledge of the LXX" we think that for "LXX" we should rather read "Old Covenant," which would make the statement quite true. We must remember also that much talking about "Quotations from LXX" merely begs the question which has to be proved, viz., as to whether the Old Covenant quotations are not rather translations from the Hebrew direct, without any side-glances at the LXX, for because these quotations are of course in Greek it does not at all follow that they must be from the Greek of the LXX.

The inspired New Covenant writers, with their accurate knowledge of Hebrew,¹ were assuredly far better fitted to translate from the Hebrew direct than the uninspired, ignorant (of Hebrew) Alexandrians. So that it seems to be, from the nature of the case, very much "*non proven*" that (as asserted) "the LXX is the principal source from which New Covenant writers derived Old Covenant quotations"—for there are many quotations which differ from the LXX. The question, therefore, to be settled with regard to Old Covenant quotations seems to be, *Not* "Why should they come

¹ The apparent exception of St. Luke is surely covered by his relationship to St. Paul, and the Blessed Virgin "Mother-of-God"; even if—*per impossible*—we could for a second forget the protecting grace and illumination of real Inspiration."

from the *LXX* Greek? " *but* rather " Why ever should they *not* come (as we believe they did) direct from the original Hebrew? "—a language which the inspired N.C. authors knew well, and were quite able themselves (without any assistance from the *LXX*) to translate at first hand into Greek.

The conclusion, therefore, of this matter which seems inevitable, is that the *LXX* cannot be looked at as an appeal from the Hebrew text . . . (cf. Taylor, P. 318, p. 32) much less as proving, by its differences from the Hebrew, the existence of other older—presumably better, but quite imaginary texts.

PART III.

THE PROBLEM STATED.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANCIENT CHURCH (JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN) VIEW.

Two positions, and two only, are possible with regard to the Hebrew text of the O.C. ; and these two are so diametrically opposed to, and destructive of, each other that if the one is right the other must be wrong, and *vice versa*.

Perhaps, then, it will be best to state as shortly and clearly as possible these two antagonistic positions ; the traditional in this chapter and the modern in the succeeding are

The traditional one.

That there is now, and ever has been, only one, original and authoritative Hebrew text of the O.C., viz., the M(assoretic) T(ext) = The " M.T."

Besides this text there is

- (a) Nothing else to be found ; for the relatively few Hebrew MSS. extant from the ninth century are merely very exact copies of that one original—the " M.T." ; and
- (b) There are extant *no* MSS. to be found of any other text ; such may be " assumed " or " asserted " ; but cannot be produced.

The result of these facts is, that there being only

one text and no trace of any other, any textual criticism of the "M.T." (as *e.g.* that of the N.C. "Textus Receptus") is simply unthinkable through the entire lack of any material to work on.

From the above positions two further results necessarily emerge, viz. :

- (1) That N.C. methods and canons of criticism cannot be applied to the M.T. ; and
- (2) This being so, it follows naturally that, with regard to the O.C. writing, we have simply to receive (as the Jews have all along) the traditional "M.T."—just because there is no other.

The *πρώτον ψεύδος* of modern O.C. criticism, therefore, is its vain attempt to apply the N.C. textual methods (which are essentially comparative) to the M.T., which has not even one other to be compared with.

Also, due attention must be given to the writings which are found in smaller type on the four margins of every page of all the oldest and best MSS. of the Hebrew text.

The name "Massorah" is given to these marginal writings as containing information necessary for those into whose trust the sacred text was committed, so that they might transcribe and hand it down correctly.

The text had been fixed in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah by the "Sopherim," who were the *Authorized Revisers* of the text, and the "Massoretes" became its *authorized custodians*.

This "Massorah" does *not* contain notes or comments, but merely facts and phenomena—*e.g.* the number of times several letters occur in various books, number of words and the middle word, number of verses and the middle verse, number of expressions, and combination of words, etc.

And all this is preserved, "not from a perverted ingenuity, (as commonly and falsely alleged,) but "for the set purpose of safeguarding the Sacred Text "and preventing the loss or misplacement of a "single letter or word."

This "Massorah" work is not all contained in the margins of any one MS.—and no MS. contains the whole of it. It is spread over many MSS., and the late Dr. C. D. Ginsburg was the first and only scholar who set himself to collect and collate the whole, gathering it from every available MS. in the Libraries of many countries. He published it in four vols. folio, and only a few copies have been printed, which are obtainable only by the original subscribers.

Now when the Hebrew text was printed (A.D. 1477-88), only the large type in columns was "taken," and the small type of "Massorah" in the margins was "left" entirely unheeded, so that when translators came to the printed text they were necessarily destitute of the information and helps contained in the "Massorah," and the "Revisers" (1881) as well as the translators of the Authorized "Version" (1611) carried out their work, (both of "them,) without any idea of the treasures contained

“in the ‘Massorah,’ and therefore without giving
“a hint of it to their English readers.”

The “Companion Bible” (Oxford University Press) is the first edition of the Authorized Version which gives some of these treasures, and its readers are thereby “put in possession of information denied
“to former generations of translators, commentators,
“and general Bible students.”¹

The “Sopherim” were, according to certain principles, the authorized and final *revisers* of the Hebrew text of the sacred books, whereas the “Massoretes” were merely the authoritative *custodians* of this traditionally and orally transmitted text. Their functions were entirely different from those of their predecessors, the “Sopherim”—for they were strictly precluded from developing these principles, or altering the text in any particular.

Their province was merely to safeguard the text delivered to them by “building a hedge round it” (the “Massorah”), to protect it against any alteration or the adoption of any glosses which still survived in MSS. or were exhibited in ancient versions.

A short summary of the above view.

1. There is one and one only Hebrew text—the “M.T.”—which is, and has been all along, accepted the Hebrew text of the Church (Jewish and Christian).
2. This text is the original Hebrew text (M.T.)

¹ The above quotations are taken from “The Companion Bible,” Part I., Appendix 30.

fixed and settled by the "Sopherim" at Ezra's command. Its originality has been received with unbroken consensus, all through the Middle Ages, and never questioned till the seventeenth century.

3. The work of the *Massoretes* effectually prevented any corruption or error creeping into this text; so that we not only have now the same original Hebrew text—but have it quite uncorrupt and free from error; in spite of any appearances to the contrary.

CHAPTER II.

THE MODERN CRITICAL VIEW.

AND first we must remember how

- (a) Very *modern* this view is, a *novelty* unheard of till the nineteenth century, and also that it is
- (b) Merely a re-serving up of a *seventeenth* century attempt of the two Roman and Protestant critics—which was at once on its first appearance repudiated by the Swiss Reformed Churches, and their verdict upheld by such experts as the Buxtorfs.

This very modern view begins in a strange way by “assuming” over and over again that our received Hebrew text is corrupt.

In modern commentaries we very frequently meet with the objectionable word “corruption” applied to the Hebrew text of the Old Covenant.

We give some specimens of this feature of modern criticism—taken at random.

1. “This probably signifies not only a new paragraph but a later hand.”
2. This leads to the conclusion that there is

some "original corruption of the Hebrew text."

3. "The Hebrew of this verse seems to be so corrupt that there is no satisfactory meaning to be obtained from it."
4. "The text in this verse is extremely difficult, and no satisfactory translation can be given of it."
5. "It is certain that the original text *must* be corrupt."
6. "It is better to regard it as being in some way a corrupted text."
7. "These three verses are extremely corrupt, and it is probably impossible to restore the text with certainty."

And so on.

Very few pages are free from such remarks, so insidiously has the poison of questioning the genuineness of the text been inserted here, there, and everywhere, with an almost Teutonic thoroughness.

On every side we are met with this confession of inability to understand the Hebrew text, arising, of course (!), not from the critics' ignorance, but attributed always to alleged corruption thereof; for like the schoolboy who always thinks the "book is wrong," modern critics never seem to suspect that the difficulty may lie with themselves and *not* with the book!

There must, however, be set forth some ground or reason for such an atmosphere of "corruption" as the moderns allege in the case of the Hebrew text.

And it is here that the malign influence of the LXX comes to their rescue, for this translation affords plenty of instances of variations from the one authorized Hebrew text.

Modern criticism has fastened on the LXX version as giving it material for its "corruption-atmosphere," a fertile soil for its "assertion" and "assumptions"; material, therefore, which had to be, has been, and still is being, worked for all it is worth in the direction of undermining the authority of the "M.T."

From the LXX we get plenty of "variations," which, it is alleged, come from some other Hebrew texts or recensions, which are quite

"Unknown . . . and which 'twere well to know."

As the late Professor Swete says:

"It is the business of the O.C. textual critic to get behind the official text and to recover, *so far as he can*, various recensions which it has replaced."

It is well that the saving clause is inserted "*so far as he can*," for (except the recension of the Samaritan Pentateuch) there are no such recensions recoverable.

How then is the critic to "get behind the official text"? How indeed! save by

1. "Assuming" that it has displaced other and presumably better Hebrew texts; and
2. By using the Greek variations of the LXX on the assumption that "various readings

represent a plurality of Hebrew archetypes "
(=" originals").

So that all depends upon the value of the LXX as a translation, and this further depends on whether we possess the *real* original LXX itself in its integrity.

These two important preliminary queries, therefore, have to be cleared out of the way :

- (a) Have we the real original LXX version?
and, when that is settled,
- (b) What is its value ?

Leaving LXX scholars to settle the first point, we proceed to determine the value of the only "received" text of the LXX and we find :

1. " That it is *not* a homogeneous work (of one equal value throughout) but differs very considerably in character and value in different books, if not in parts of the same books" (Kirkpatrick).

i.e. It is not to be compared, for a second, in value with our " Authorized Version " of the Bible as a translation, for the " Authorized Version " is homogeneous.

2. And we are told further : " That, in the field of O.C. interpretation, the witness of the LXX must be received with greater caution ; for Greek-speaking Jews, whose knowledge of Hebrew was probably acquired at Alexandria from teachers of very moderate attainments, possess no

prescriptive right to act as guides as to the meaning of obscure Hebrew words and sentences."

3. The LXX transliterations, paraphrases, lacunæ, doublets, confused and scarcely intelligible renderings, reveal the fact that, in difficult passages, the LXX translators had recourse to "mere conjecture." The LXX, therefore, has very little intrinsic value as a translation, mainly because the LXX translators were most imperfect Hebrew scholars. Further, we must remember that the LXX Version ought never to have been made, for the Hebrew O.C. writings were *not* intended to be translated, being the peculiar possession of the Jews—which they were to keep jealously *from* all other nations, as they have done to this day; in this again the Old Covenant differs entirely from the New, and we know how the LXX was regarded at first by the faithful Jews as an impiety for which there could be only a fictitious need.

Of course we know that this daring attempt to *translate* the Divine Word was overruled (like other evils) and used as a preparation for the Gospel, still *per se* it was both impious and unnecessary in its origin. Yet it is this version which modern criticism delights to honour,

simply because it gives the only pretence of material that it has to work upon, in its variations from the M.T., which, however, fail entirely to prove (what is quite unprovable) the existence of other older and better Hebrew texts than the "M.T."

This, of course, cannot be done, simply because none such, from the nature of the case, are to be found, nor even imagined, by anyone who has got a fair grasp of these two important points:

- (a) The *oral* transmission of the text; and
- (b) The "Massorah" preservation of the same.

Even if it be granted that in some degree the LXX *evil* may have been overruled and used by God for His purposes in providing a vocabulary for the New Covenant writings, and a doctrinal terminology which appears in the Epistles, still LXX variations certainly cannot be used as "proving" that there "must" have been other Hebrew texts from which it was made (other, *i.e.*, than the M.T.).

For on the critics rests the *onus probandi*; their first duty is to *prove* very conclusively why, and how, the LXX was *not* an attempt at a translation from the M.T. only.

We know there was, and is, this M.T. received by the Church, and we also know of no other; and, therefore, until the above *onus probandi* has been removed, it is, and must be, a pure "assump-

tion" (however widely and by whomsoever held) that the LXX variations prove, or even presuppose, a different Hebrew text or texts. It is said :

"The MSS. employed by LXX translators have disappeared long ago, and nothing has turned up in Egypt, where alone fragments of such MSS. might be found"; but may there not be another and truer cause both of their "disappearance" and of their equally strange "non-reappearance," viz., because they never really existed—never made any appearance at all?

For this suggestion surely there is a great deal more to be said than for many of those made so gratuitously by the critics; for only a little study of the *oral* transmission of the original traditional Hebrew text (M.T.) and of the "Massorah" suffices to show the utter improbability, or even impossibility, of any other MSS. being allowed to exist.

CHAPTER III.

THESE TWO VIEWS CONTRASTED ; WITH RESULT.

WE have sketched out as briefly as possible the two views—the only two—that are, or can be, held with regard to the received text of the Hebrew Scriptures :

1. The *ancient*, traditional, *Church* view that the M.T. is the original text—free from corruption and error, and must be so ; and
2. The *very modern*, *critical* view that it—the M.T.—is *not* the sole original text, and is full of corruption, so corrupt as to be unreliable.

Not only are these two views as diametrically opposed to and destructive of each other as can be conceived, but further, the reasons for both views are equally clear and opposite, as follows :—

(a) For the *Traditional* view the reasons are :

1. It is *the* text, because there is no other, and it has been most scrupulously handed down from generation to generation by most careful “ *oral* ” transmission ; and
2. The “ *Massoretes* ” jealously preserved it from corruption and error by the “ *Massorah*.”

(b) For the *Modern* view

The sole reason is the variations from the M.T. which occur in the LXX Version.

These variations, however, cannot be used as any argument, because of the utterly unreliable nature of the LXX as a translation.

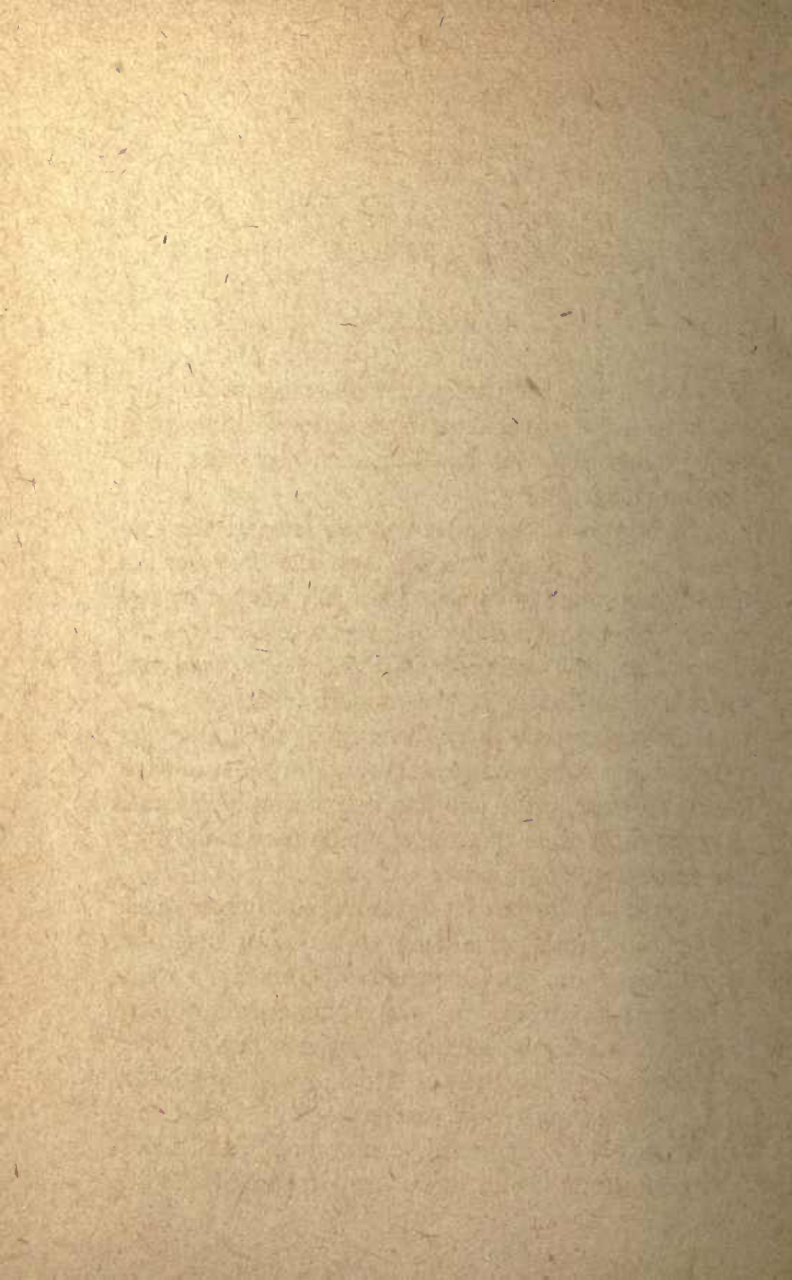
We must remember, also, that these variations themselves arise from the woeful incompetence of the translators from the Hebrew language—which, admittedly, they knew most imperfectly.

This incompetence, moreover, has been proved to demonstration by all the varied devices used by the LXX in their attempt to put forth something in the semblance of a translation. (Such devices as paraphrases, lacunæ, doublets, etc.)

When all these undoubted facts are fully taken into account, the sum total of this evidence and the final result, is that we have to give up speaking of "contrast," and confess that there is, and can be, no comparison at all between these *two* views.

"The one" only can be "taken" and "the other" must be "left" to its intrinsic doom by all who respect the claims both of the "obvious" and of the Truth Himself.

PART IV.
CONCLUSIONS.



CHAPTER I.

AS TO LXX.

It remains now only to gather up some of the conclusions of our investigations and to see how they bear distinctly on the authority of the Old Covenant Scriptures.

—And first of all we must try and sum up the evidence as regards the LXX. And the only verdict obtainable seems to be that the LXX cannot by any means bear the weight of the many inferences, deductions, and conclusions which have been unsparingly laid on it by the modern critics.

Almost wantonly it has been made their starting-point, and a happy hunting-ground for most of their destructive theories and fantasies, simply because there was no other quarter to which they could turn for some sort of support.

A great scholar has lately reminded us that, where evidence is not forthcoming to prove or disprove, it is wiser not to dogmatize. This is a self-evident proposition to which none can object; and yet, with no evidence forthcoming or even probable, there has been of late no such “dogmatizing,” “assuming,” and “asserting,” as that put forth by Higher Criticism with regard to the LXX.

Its position, as of great importance, has been

unceasingly asserted and Teutonically "dogmatized" by the critics.

The LXX is nearly everything to them, their be-all and end-all; the unfailing source from which they seem to get all they want by means of assuming that the LXX supplies them with "evidence" here and plenty of hypotheses anywhere they are needed.

But it is just with regard to the LXX that real evidence is most lacking.

Its own true text is not yet determined, and perhaps may never be, and its translations and emendations are often so hopeless as to be almost meaningless time after time.

As regards the deductions so lightly drawn from its unjustifiable and unscholarly variations from the Massoretic Text, they partake equally of the hypothetical "dogmatizing" concerning the dubious LXX text itself. How, then, can any such tremendous assertions as to the entirely unprovable existence of pre-Massoretic Hebrew MSS. be really based on such a flimsy foundation as the perfectly explainable variations of the LXX mistranslations, paraphrases, lacunæ, etc.? Assuredly, therefore, it is well within the mark to conclude that, as far as the LXX is concerned, no support can be obtained from it for the mere dogmatizing of the critics that here, there, and nearly everywhere the one authorized original Hebrew text (Massoretic) is "corrupt," "cannot be conjectured," etc., as has been so often and falsely alleged of late on no better ground than that of these LXX variations.

CHAPTER II.

AS TO THE MASSORETIC TEXT.

NEXT as regards the Massoretic Text, it seems quite clear that its case stands out in striking contrast with that of the LXX. For :

1. Its reliability has been, until these latter days, universally accepted and handed down from age to age. As we read it to-day it is substantially the same as when fixed in the Massoretic Text, which itself was only the necessary stereotyping of the one text that had been handed down *orally* from the first.

2. We know exactly what that text is, which is a great deal more than can be said for the LXX.

Further, we have to note that the history of this one and only Hebrew text divides itself naturally into two main periods, sharply distinguished by the fixing of the Massoretic Text.

(a) First there is the long period from the very first up to the time when, under Ezra, the one traditional text was, by the help of the Sopherim, revised and authoritatively fixed, as well as its canonical books finally selected (to the exclusion of all and any apocryphal writings), thereby guarding the sacred Scriptures from any fatal intermixture with Alexandrian Hellenism.

All through this first period—of such antiquity B.C.—of course much evidence cannot be expected to be forthcoming, nor was it needed—for the

original Hebrew was most carefully handed down from generation to generation, and that is all that has to be said about it.

Still we must never forget what a stupendous miracle this *oral* transmission was, for which the Jewish Church was specially trained and entirely responsible.

When we reflect how impossible—humanly speaking—such a scrupulous transmission was, we see one more, and perhaps the greatest, instance of God's great law of Love, viz., that what man cannot do by himself or by his own unaided power God did for, and with, him, enabling the Jewish Church to fix and preserve the sacred Scriptures of "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (=the writings), as our Lord named them, inviolate from the first.

(b) Then, after they were stereotyped in the Massoretic Text, the Massoretes took up the task of preserving them intact, and further settled the right text by inventing and adding the *vowel points* to fix the right pronunciation and sense of the sacred consonantal authoritative text.

When this was done (c. A.D. 700) the now *vowel-pointed* text passed over into the hands of another guild called the "Nakdanim"—(the punctuators)—whose duty was to conserve the Massoretic labours, by furnishing the consonantal text with the Massoretic vowel points as well as with the Massorah's *magna et parva* transmitted by the Massoretes.

To this end each distinguished "Nakdam" of acknowledged authority supplied himself with a

copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, which he generally made himself in accordance with the Massorah, and which became a model codex. These codices, however, all exactly reproduced the one standard Massoretic Text as we find from those which have come down to us, and their labours bring the story down almost to the time of printed copies.

It should also be carefully observed that while the perfection of the original Hebrew text need not be insisted on absolutely, still the probability of such perfection is very high and must be emphasized—when we remember certain notable points such as :

1. The Hebrew writing (when and recourse was had to it) was most carefully made because the reading and writing of Hebrew was originally used only for

(a) Liturgical readings in the Temple and synagogues.

(b) For the purposes of the doctors—that they should have standard codices for the very purpose of safeguarding and protecting the sacred text ; and

2. Apparent difficulties need, perhaps, greater knowledge and scholarship and reticence for their solution than are commonly forthcoming at present. Wisely we should pause a long time before we speak of errors or mistakes other than our own.

Whole classes of such difficulties, numerical, chronological, local, and the like, may only prove that we are not able, as yet, to see or explain, or even understand, the true solutions, because lacking some necessary clue or clues.

To attain these right solutions much scholarly study on most orthodox lines is urgently needed ; study, that is, from the right point of view, instead of that modern criticism which begins and ends with negation, denying, questioning ; and so unfairly begs the question over and over again, presupposing and endeavouring to prove only that the text is wrong, corrupt, full of mistakes, etc., instead of aiming steadfastly at proving right, clear, and coherent whatever may *seem* wrong or obscure.

This right study (not criticism) of the Hebrew text is, and has to be, so radically different from modern methods that we should notice carefully how all the enormous work expended on it by generations of Jewish scholars has worked entirely on, and from, what was settled, once for all, long ago ; not feverishly "stretching" out after and inventing hypotheses for themselves, to end at last in some imaginary so-called "assured results." The right study must be carried out scientifically, *i.e.* by way of axiom, and solid assured foundation, fixed long ago, on and from which alone real work can be, and has been, done, and will be to the end ; in such contrast, too, to the textual criticism of the Greek New Covenant text which, at last, in the nineteenth century A.D. has achieved out of the sifting of thousands of MSS. something like finality, though even yet that may not be quite final.

So totally different are the work and methods concerning the study of the Old and New Covenant original texts.

CHAPTER III.

SOME NEGLECTED FACTORS OF THE PROBLEM.

AFTER all, before leaving our subject, something further needs to be said which may help to disperse some of the confusion or misapprehension that too largely obtains with regard to it at the present time.

This confusion or misapprehension, I think, is due, in the main, to the general neglect, conscious or unconscious, of some of the root factors—which must be accounted for in any fair dealing of this problem.

I. And the first neglected or ignored factor is the question of the *miraculous*, about which (in a slightly different connection) it has been truly said that :

“One of the peculiar features about the New Testament history is that there is an element of the miraculous in it . . . and, roughly speaking, the whole tendency of critical discussion of the New Testament is towards ruling this element out of order.”

But this truth is, obviously, ten thousand times more true of the Old Covenant history, which, by comparison, is all miraculous—and, at any rate, now is the very worst time to attempt to

deny or gird at the miraculous when we are all surrounded by it both at home, and, especially, "at the front."

This factor has to be faced and not "critically" explained away; and to shirk or ignore it is surely to be anything you like but "scientific" or up-to-date. And not only have we to face the enormous volume of the miraculous in the Old Covenant history—but especially to take into account the actual fact of the Divinely made and Divinely preserved original Hebrew text—such a hard fact—for there it is to-day, and has been from the first.

And further, "the miraculous" has especially to be accepted, and worked from, in its two vital departments of:

(a) Something like real *Inspiration* in its technical sense, and

(b) True *Prediction* of the future, real "fore-telling" as well as forth-telling.

Any forgetting or ignoring of these two lines of miracle cannot produce anything like satisfactory, fair criticism and cannot claim to be accounted truly "scientific."

2. Again, real true "*tradition*" must once more come to its own, and be accorded its high place as one of the vital factors in this case. As has been acknowledged:

The higher criticism "pretends to have swept away tradition "nearly entirely." "All legitimacy is denied to it." "Tradition is the bastard of history" (Dr. Briggs) and "should only be resorted

to when we have 'no history,' and 'new scholars are constantly endeavouring to wipe off the scanty remains which have been left,' " but it has also been truly said, " Tradition very often is history, the only history we have," *e.g.* of the origins of our own or any other land.

And, I suppose, there has never been in all the world's history any such marvellously true, because scrupulously exact and continuous—without break—tradition as that of the *oral* (pre-Massoretic) transmission of the Hebrew text—with its wonderful Massorah (which very word means "tradition").

Such tradition as this must be taken into account, and that in spite of all the worst that can be said about its flagrant abuse in other quarters, Roman, etc.

We thank God not only for "our creation," but also for our "preservation" as well, and much more thankful are we for the wonderful "preservation" of the Word which He so miraculously "created."

3. Another factor which can neither be ignored nor neglected is the *multiform character of Evidence*.

All evidence is not the same evidence, and because we cannot have evidence of one kind there is often another kind, even more cogent, forthcoming.

The mathematical kind is not the logical, and the historical is neither, but all, and each, of them are equally effective evidence in their own sphere, and to be reckoned with as such. But each has its own province and is strictly limited to that. "Hitherto

shalt thou come"—to the border line—"but no further."

And so it is that what we call historical evidence can only reach and apply so far back as its peculiar data (tablets, documents, etc.) are to be found, but beyond and behind that limit something better even than history has been provided for us, viz., Revelation, which both knows and records prehistoric events with the accuracy of the absolute Truth Himself.

Just as no one thinks there is anything lacking to evidence, because no original autograph of St. Paul's or St. John's is to be found, *a fortiori*, when we think of the immense antiquity of the Old Covenant originals, it is not the least surprising that we have not any evidence for such after the manner of the law courts or the German critics. Mercifully these originals have been specially removed from the precarious custody of MSS., documents, etc., which are so liable to errors of all kinds, and handed over to the far safer keeping of the oral transmission of the Jewish Church. As has been truly said, "Like the body of Moses, they were withdrawn by the Divine Providence from the custody" of MSS. and the like, and handed over to a safe keeping that depends on the *ear*, and *not* on the *eye*, for the right vowel sounds which ensure not only the right words but also their only true meaning.

This wonderful "oral" evidence must be fully taken into account, even though at present it seems

hardly to be realized or understood properly, and certainly is mentioned very rarely, if ever.

4. Last and greatest of all working factors is "The Church of the Living God." The one Church of both Covenants, the Old and New, who we cannot but note, is of course the great outstanding Miracle of God, while one of her names might well be real true *Tradition*; and She is also the crown and climax of all *Evidence* worth the name.

Being so Divine 'a thing, nay, Christ, His own Body—mystical, and His real Incarnate Presence here on earth, there can be no surprise that She is all these things and much more also.

But, at any rate, and at the lowest possible estimate, She is "a" if not "the" factor to be reckoned with still.

The great surprise is how She has been and can be still so forgotten, neglected, and ignored, in quarters where we have every right to expect very different treatment; though, perhaps, very many who regularly declare their faith in Her as Christ, His Body, hardly realize how much of practical guidance and strength this faith involves in nearly every department, but in none, assuredly, more than in this of being the true witness and custodian of the canonical Scriptures in their original Hebrew and Greek texts.

It has been truly said:

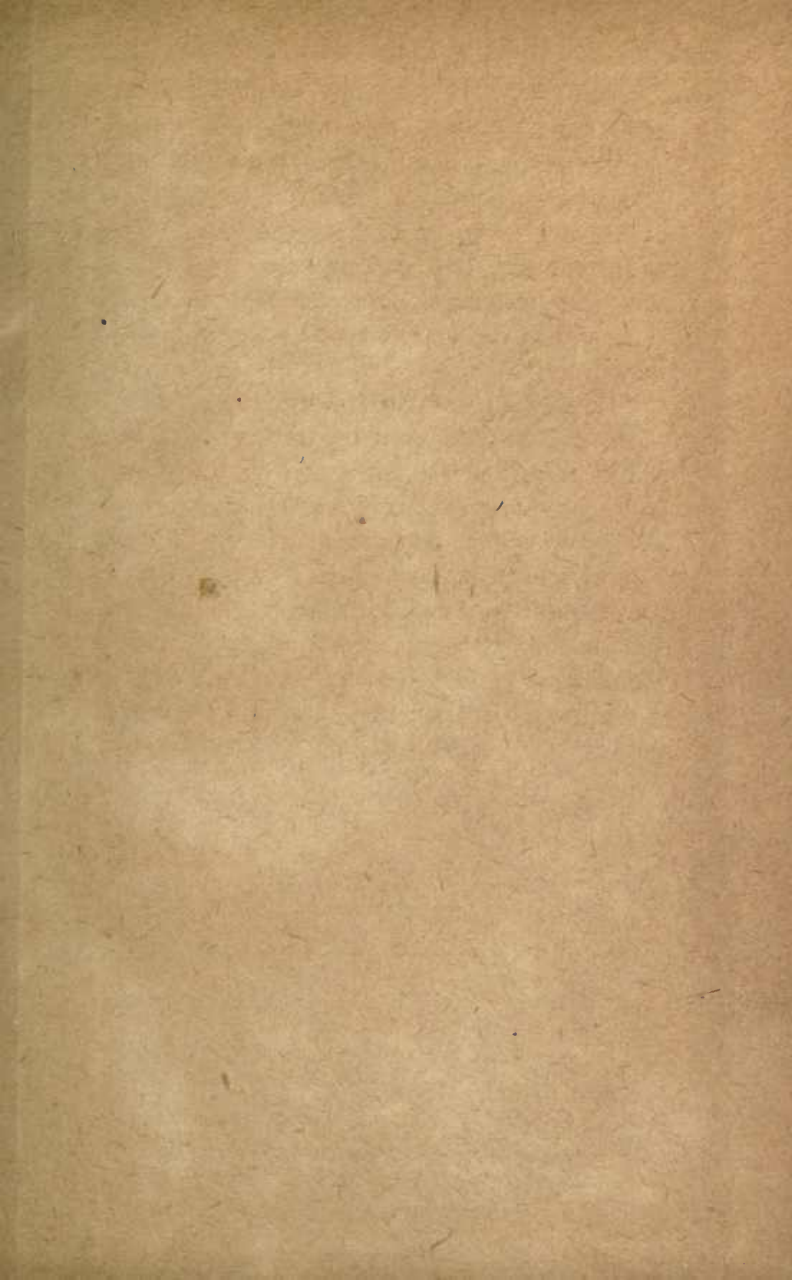
"This is a wonderful fact, and wonderful it also is that we so little reflect on it."

And it is to recall attention to it, and to other

neglected facts and factors of the problem that we have attempted this small fragment of that "destructive criticism" (of the critics) which is so needed at present "to get rid of many preconceived notions, to pull down," that we may reinstate the old and the true in its ancient, and, for wellnigh two thousand years, unquestioned position of light and honour.

"So needed," for such reinstatement is of course an act of bare justice and reparation due to the much maligned and neglected traditional position; and also is of very great help in restoring to us that Bible authority, which depends mainly on the authentic original texts, and which has been so ruthlessly—sapped and undermined of late, by the too generally accepted assumptions and assertions of the Higher Criticism such as, for instance, in the case of

"THE LXX FALLACY"



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 118 500 8

